

6301 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

Summary of Findings and Conclusion*

Unit Name and Number: CA-080-212-Juniper Flats West

Results of Analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? X Yes No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes X No N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes X No N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? X Yes No N/A

Conclusion

 The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

 X The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

Team Members:

James P. Aragon, Fire Management Officer, Barstow Field Office

Anthony Chavez Jr, Rangeland Management Specialist, Barstow Field Office

Birgit Hoover, Realty Specialist, Barstow Field Office

William Quillman, Supervisory Resource Management Specialist, Barstow Field Office

Tim Williamson, Wilderness Coordinator, Barstow Field Office

Approved by:

Name: Wickie Quillman

Title: Acting Field Mgr

Date: 8-13-2012

**This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.*

Wilderness Inventory
CDCA Wilderness Inventory Unit #212
CA-080-212 Juniper Flats West
August 13, 2012

Background

Under Section 201 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLMPA) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is required to maintain an inventory of public land resources, including lands with wilderness characteristics. Wilderness characteristics are part of the resource values to be considered in inventories and other land-use planning processes. The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System which identified a system of federally managed areas designated by Congress as "wilderness areas". The goal of the Wilderness Act was to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefit of an enduring resource of wilderness." While the terms "wilderness character" and "wilderness characteristic" are not explicitly defined in the Wilderness Act, Section 2(c) identifies the wilderness characteristics used for evaluation of lands proposed for wilderness protections. The terms generally used to describe and evaluate lands with wilderness characteristics include size, naturalness, opportunities for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation and special features of "ecological, geological or other features of scientific, scenic or historic value."

All public lands within the California Desert District (CDD) were inventoried between 1978 and 1979 through a sequential process to determine if any of the CDD lands possessed wilderness characteristics. This process initially involved identifying Wilderness Inventory Units (WIUs) that were considered to potentially contain wilderness characteristics. Through a BLM cataloging of resources and with public involvement all the WIUs were reviewed at that time. The WIUs or portions of land within a WIU that were found to have wilderness characteristics were identified by the BLM in 1979 as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and lands not found to have wilderness characteristics were managed without wilderness considerations. A WSA is managed to maintain their wilderness suitability until Congress either designates them as wilderness or denies this designation. A final intensive study phase between 1979 and 1991, which included the preparation of mineral surveys and an environmental impact statement and additional public involvement, led the BLM to recommend to the Secretary of the Interior that some of these WSAs should be designated as wilderness and others released for other management. The Secretary then forwarded his recommendations to Congress which has taken action to designate wilderness areas and WSAs in the CDD.

Since the original wilderness characteristic inventories are more than thirty years old, they are being updated at this time. The reason for this update is to accommodate the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) in designating lands being considered for development by determining if conditions in the units have changed (i.e., do wilderness characteristics exist in locations where they were not present in the 1979). Several management factors could result if changes are found in these units. Specific examples would be, if natural or agency-initiated reclamation projects have restored the natural conditions or if land acquisitions have restored the

ability for a solitary recreation, in either case wilderness characteristics are now present and the agency might have to manage these lands for their existence.

As part of the preparation of this wilderness update, a records research was done. The permanent inventory file for WIU #212 could not be located for this review however the descriptive narrative for the unit was found in the *California Desert Conservation Area, Wilderness Inventory, Final Descriptive Narratives, March 31, 1979*

(http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/pa/wilderness/wi.Par.92238.File.dat/CDCAWildernessInvNarr_Final_March1979.pdf) and the pages which describe this unit have been included

in the appendix section. Other sources of information used in the research and writing of this inventory report were: *the California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980*

(http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/pdfs/cdd_pdfs.Par.aa6ec747.File.pdf/CA_Desert.pdf), the *Juniper Flats Cultural Area Management Plan of 1988*, the 1998 Victorville Desert

Access Guide (DAG) and the Juniper Flats Sub Region Off Highway Vehicle West Mojave Supplement Map which showed open travel routes on BLM administered lands. A field

reconnaissance trip was made on May 6, 2012 to record and photograph the unit's environmental situation. The trip also involved driving designated routes within and county roads around the unit to help define the 1979 boundaries.

Year 2012 Inventory Unit Number/Name CA-080-212-Juniper Flats West

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?

Yes

Inventory Source: 1979 Wilderness Inventory files, BLM Barstow FO

Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s): CA-080-212

Map Name(s)/Number(s): USDI BLM CASO Wilderness Final Inventory, Dec. 1979

BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Barstow Field Office

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics:

Inventory Source: 1979 Wilderness Inventory Files, BLM Barstow FO

Unit#/ Name	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Unique & Supplemental Values? Y/N
212	N/A	N	N	N	N

Summarize any known primary reasons for prior findings in this table:

In 1979 wilderness inventory reported that most of the land within this area was considered public lands with the non-public lands located near the base of the mountains and along Bowen Ranch Road. Bowen Ranch Road was also constituted the eastern border of the area. The northern border was a combination of a steel structure powerline and a network of graded streets which provided access to private dwellings. The western boundary was the homes and structures aligned with Deep Creek Road. Lastly, the southern boundary was the San Bernardino National Forest. This area consisted of a series of mesas, most approximately 4000 to 4600 feet high. This area had a dominate plant community consisting mainly of a Pinyon-Juniper forest. As the slope decreased from the mountains, housing developments came into proliferation. Modern human use upon the landscape could be seen throughout much of the area. Overshadowing the central part of this area was a large steel structure powerline which runs through the middle, east to west. Areas for solitude were lacking below the mountainous areas and in the upland locations there few opportunities for primitive or unconfined recreation. This was an area where man's works dominated the landscape and thus these lands were thought to have no wilderness characteristics.

Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name: CA-080-212-Juniper Flats West

(1) Sufficient size

Yes.

The area currently having wilderness characteristics encompasses the southern and interior parts of the 1979 area. The 1979 inventory indicated that this area was mostly public lands and today this appears to be the case once the upland hills and mountains begin (approximately 3500 feet). Since the last inventory, just over 4,200 acres were acquired by BLM in 1990.

Acreage: Estimated at approximately 9,222 pending GIS calculation with a perimeter of roughly 32.6 miles.

Boundaries: This area does not have well defined boundaries for the western and northern borders. The eastern boundary is Bowen Ranch Road until it intersects with private land. The southern boundary is the San Bernardino National Forest. The western boundary is considered Deep Creek road until it merges with U.S. Army Corp lands. The northern boundary is a steel structure powerline combined with a network of graded streets which provided access to private dwellings. With the exception of the southern boundary, private homes and lands mingle with boundary lands of this area.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: BLM with private inholdings.

Location: Area 212 is a combination of public and private lands in the northern foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains. This area is located south of the Apple Valley and State Highway 18, west of the Mojave River, north of the San Bernardino National Forest and west of Bowen Ranch Road. This area is commonly referred to as "Juniper Flats".

Topography: Rolling mesas, hills and mountains are interspersed with steep valleys ending in a rolling flat mountain top mesa. The base of this area alters rapidly from low hills and canyons to steep mountainsides with water often difficult to find. The soil is a dirt/sand mix with rocks scattered at higher elevations. Temperatures in the area range from below freezing in January to 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more in July.

Vegetation features: Due to the Willow Fire of 1999, the vegetation features have significantly changed in this area. The Pinyon-Juniper plant community which once dominated the mountain areas is mostly gone, only existing in small patches none being larger than an acre in size. Now the dominant plant community is mixed Mojave woody scrub. The mixed Mojave woody scrub is open and sparse with an abundance of bare soil between plants that gets more open and sparse as elevations increase. The most common plants in the area are: creosote bush, desert peach,

needle-grass, paper bag bush, brittlebush, cacti, Joshua trees and yucca. Quail and other small birds, ground squirrels, mule deer and bobcats dwell in the area while red-tail hawks soar above.

Major human uses/activities: Semi-primitive motorized recreation which includes all types of off-highway vehicular (OHV) use on designated routes. Other recreational uses include camping, hiking, wildlife study and hunting. The area also has a grazing allotment (Round Mountain) which typically has a hundred cattle in the area with associated grazing equipment in use. Also the area is being used for energy transmission which is currently represented by a series of steel electrical lines.

(2) Natural condition

No

In addition to the Willow Fire of 1999 which changed the landscape from forest to scrub, the major right of way (a steel powerline) dwarfs the landscape for much of the area. Remnants of the grazing allotment are located at key route intersections and the routes themselves appear to dominate the prevailing view in many places within the area.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

No

Since the 1979 inventory, the non-mountainous areas have more dwellings and residents and the upland area has seen increased levels of public OHV use. The reduction in the Pinyon-Juniper plant community to one that is mixed Mojave woody scrub has also substantially decreased opportunities for solitude.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation

No

As in the 1979 inventory, this area is crisscrossed with OHV routes (both legal and illegal) making it the significant recreational pursuit making primitive recreation difficult. The removal of the forest community has increased the impediments for opportunities for solitude.

(5) Unique and Supplemental values

Yes

The Juniper Flats Cultural Area is roughly 4,500 acres and shows evidence of prehistoric Native American activities and historic homesteading.

Appendix A

Route Analysis of Area 212

WIU # 212

Date: 07/31/2012

Appendix C - Route Analysis

Evaluator(s): Tim Williamson

Route #	Purpose	ROW Y/N/UK	ROW In Use?	Constructed Mechanically	Type of Evidence	Improved Mechanically	Hand Tools Or Machinery	Type of Evidence
Coxey Truck Trail	County Road	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 3252M	Recreation	N	N	N	Single Track			
JF 3255	Inholdings	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 3253	Recreation	UK	UK	Y	Bladed	N	Machinery	Roadside Berms
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
Unnamed	Recreation	UK	UK	N	Two Track			
JF 3276	Inholding	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 3275	Inholding	Y	Y	N	Bladed	N		Eroding Two Track
Oak Spring Road	County Road	Y	Y	Y	Bladed			
JF 3392M	Recreation N	N	N	N	Single Track			
JF 3381	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 3389	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			Eroding

WIU # 212

Date: 07/31/2012

Appendix C - Route Analysis **Evaluator(s): Tim Williamson**

Route #	Purpose	ROW Y/N/UK	ROW In Use?	Constructed Mechanically	Type of Evidence	Improved Mechanically	Hand Tools Or Machinery	Type of Evidence
JF 3391M	Recreation	N	N	N	Single Track			
Bowen Ranch Road	Inholdings	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 3310	Inholdings	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 4325	Recreation	UK	UK	N	Two Track	N		
JF 3320	Recreation	UK	UK	N	Two Track	N		
JF 3330	Powerline	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 3335	Powerline	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 3380	Powerline	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 3384	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 3385	Inholdings	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
JF 3383	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 3337M	Recreation	N	N	N	Single Track			

WIU # 212

Date: 07/31/2012

Appendix C - Route Analysis

Evaluator(s): Tim Williamson

Route #	Purpose	ROW Y/N/UK	ROW In Use?	Constructed Mechanically	Type of Evidence	Improved Mechanically	Hand Tools Or Machinery	Type of Evidence
JF 3309P	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 4343	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 4340	Inholdings	UK	UK	Y	Bladed	N		Roadside Berms
JF 4345	Inholdings	UK	UK	Y	Bladed	N		Roadside Berms
JF 4349	Old Mining Road	UK	UK	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 4330	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
JF 4352	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			

Appendix B

Photo Log of Area 212



#1 - Eastern Boundary of Area 212 along route JF3310



#2 - Southern Boundary of Area 212 along route JF3335



#3 - Middleish Center of Area 212 along route JF3380



#4 - Western Boundary of Area 212 along route JF3380

Photo Log for Area 212

Photo #	GPS	Town & Range	Dir	Description
1	3803571 N 485990 E	T3N R3W Sec1	SW	Rolling Hills & Mtns, Creosote Scrub, Rocky - Rt3310
2	3801304 N 483669 E	T3N R3W Sec10	N	Rolling Hills & Mtns, Creosote Scrub, Rocky
3	380247 N 482023 E	T3N R3W Sec 9	N	Rolling Hills/Mtns, creosote scrub - Rt3380
4	3802647 N 478971 E	T3N R3W Sec 7	SE	Base of Mtns, Creosote Scrub, Sloping - Rt3380

Appendix C

BLM California Desert Conservation Area Wilderness Final Inventory, Dec. 1979

Written Description & Map of Area 212

and Creosote Bush Scrub are encountered below 4000 feet toward the valley floor. Maximum elevation is 5880 feet along Grapevine Canyon road at the National Forest boundary. Lowest elevation in the area is 3200 feet, near the railroad on the northern boundary.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Many roads and ways have been constructed, as have several habitations. One small housing development has 15 to 20 homes. These permanent improvements and human habitations alter the primeval character and influence of the land. The higher areas of the San Bernardino foothills contain several ways among the rugged, heavily wooded canyons and ridges. These ways may receive some hand maintenance as they are used for access to a number of inhabited shacks. The areas immediately surrounding these occupancies have been improved in support of the dwellings, with moderate clearing and outbuildings. Good vegetative and topographic screening serve to isolate these improvements. Small-scale mining activity occurs to a very limited degree, but is substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The valley portion does not contain topographic or vegetative features which would provide screening from intrusions. Opportunities for solitude are limited. Habitation in the area further detracts from opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfin ed recreation opportunities. The higher elevations in this roadless area contain canyons, huge assemblages of granite boulders, and good stands of Pinyon and Juniper. However, areas of solitude, and especially areas offering outstanding opportunities for unconfin ed recreation, are segmented and scattered by the occupancies and associated access roads through the area. Thus, marginal recreational opportunities, coupled with the number of man-made improvements, have eliminated this area from further consideration as to wilderness characteristics.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The few comments received were split between support for wilderness study inclusion of the transition area between high desert and mountain plant communities and exclusion due to the presence of improvements.

AREA 212

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is defined along its eastern border by a graded dirt road (Bowen Ranch Road) and a U.S. Forest Service Road. The northern boundary is a steel-structure powerline right-of-way and a network of graded streets as access to habitations along the slopes below Juniper Flat. The western boundary is Deep Creek Road, for ease of definition, but actually is defined by numerous graded dirt roads to dwellings below the Ord Mountains. The southern boundary is the San Bernardino National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is mostly public lands. Areas around the base of Juniper Flat are totally non-public. Several other non-public sections intrude into the area along Bowen Ranch Road.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a mesa at approximately 4000 feet to 4600 feet which is vegetated with the Pinyon-Juniper Woodland plant community. The northern and western edges of the mesa drop abruptly through a series of deep canyons to Apple Valley and the Mojave River Valley at approximately 3200 feet. The slope lessens considerably at approximately 3400 feet where numerous housing developments have proliferated. The Joshua Tree Woodland is the common plant community encountered here. The top of the mesa is generally flat, but has many irregularities. Small valleys and hills and several large granite rock formations present a rugged landscape.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man's imprint upon the landscape can be seen throughout much of this area. A large steel-structure powerline splits Juniper Flat from northeast to southwest, but does not have an accompanying maintenance road along its entire route due to the

irregular terrain. On the mesa, several ways provide access to virtually all points. Three full sections of private land have human habitation and ranch development with out-buildings. Two other dwellings are located near the northern face of this mesa. The lower slopes below the mesa are heavily developed with street networks and housing tracts. This is an area where man's works dominate the landscape.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are wholly lacking in this area below 3400 feet. On Juniper Flat, good vegetative and topographic screening are available, as is diversity of potential recreation. However, permanent and semi-permanent improvements create a mosaic of both relatively undisturbed areas and areas where the primeval character of the land is not evident. Opportunities for solitude exist in this pattern, but unconfined recreational opportunities are lacking because evidence of man's work is frequently encountered.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments recognize the presence of natural values in portions of the roadless area. The findings recognize this also; however, primitive recreation opportunities could not be considered outstanding.

AREA 213

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The southeastern boundary is a large steel-structure powerline right-of-way and maintenance road. The northern boundary is a maintained dirt road along the west edge of the Pisgah lava flow and a short section of Old National Trails Highway. The western boundary is a maintained dirt road used as access to the Silver Bell Mine.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 60 percent public land. Non-public areas are in strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area is primarily composed of a creosote-covered alluvial fan and includes a small section of low hills of the far eastern extent of the Rodman Mountain complex. These mountains slope off to the northeast as does the alluvial fan. The area is relatively small, encompassing 18 square miles.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Mining activity occurs at the edge of the Rodman Mountains at the Silver Cliffs Mine, and is an apparent scar upon the landscape. Elsewhere, the imprints of man's work are substantially unnoticeable.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Opportunities for solitude are lacking in the area. The flat creosote plain does not have sufficient vegetative screening to provide isolation from other visitors and the limited section of the Rodman Mountains which is included does not contain enough depth in its features to enhance solitude. Recreational diversity is also limited by the even terrain. Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are not apparent. The adjacent freeway further impairs upon the area.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

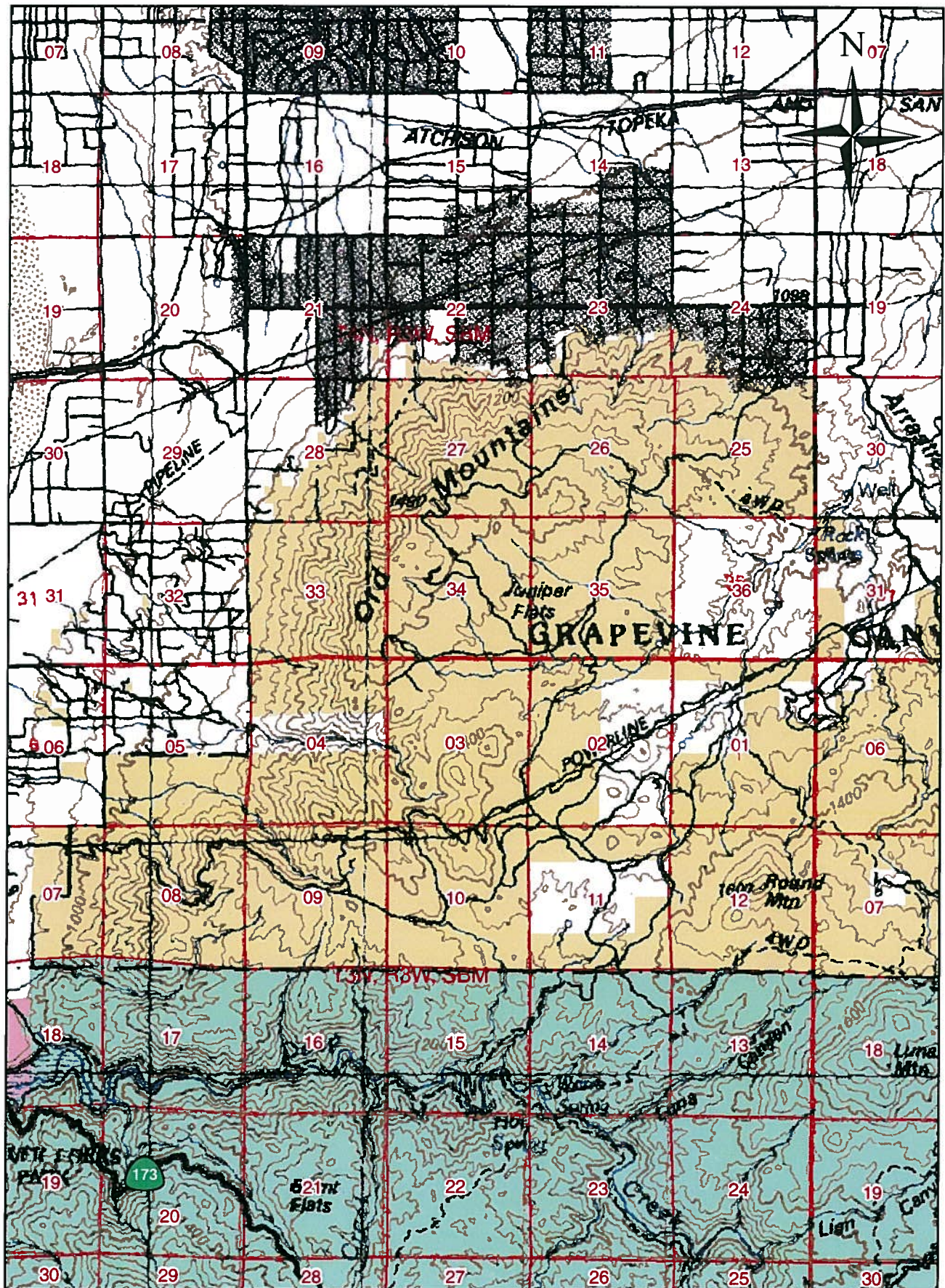
The majority of comments addressed study phase factors.



Appendix D

Current Land Status Map of Area 212

Current Land Status of Area 212



0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6
 Miles